



The Avenue Project Task Force

Wednesday, March 15, 2006

6:00pm-8:00pm

St. Gregory Grammar School
2218 Dorchester Avenue

Meeting Notes

Attendance:

Task Force Members: Marisa Coleman, Edward Crowley, Sean Dennison, Eileen Fenton, Rosanne Foley, Jane Howard, Michael Mackan, Kimberlee Smith, Anita Marshall, Richard O'Mara, Arlene Lopes, Anne Riley, Leslie MacWeeney, My Lam (Viet-Aid Rep)

Inés Soto-BRA, Jeremy Rosenberger-BRA, Eswaran Selvarajah-BRA, Ralph DeNisco-BTD, Vineet Gupta-BTD, Mary Knasas-DND, Andre Porter-DND, John Lynch-DND, Frank O'Brien-PWD, Elizabeth Leary-ISD, Evelyn Darling-FCMS, Dan Lerner-SMAMS, Molly Dunford-ONS, Trang Tran Le-Rep. Martin Walsh's Office, Deidre McDermott-Councilor Feeney's Office

I. Welcome and Introductions

- Meeting was called to order by the Dorchester Avenue Project Manager Inés Soto.
- Mayor Menino was introduced and stopped by to thank all the city agencies for their hard work regarding the Dorchester Avenue Project.
- The Mayor mentioned that the Avenue is a gateway to the city. He highlighted that transportation is key to the Avenue and its overall improvement.
- Mayor Menino spoke to the group about how the Dorchester Avenue Project was conceived. He mentioned that it came from a Columbia/Savin Hill Association Meeting. He announced the plan to add to a sense of urgency to the Avenue to coincide with the Columbia/Savin Hill Association's upcoming projects.
- The Mayor concluded by stating that Dorchester Avenue is one of the major boulevards of the City of Boston and looks forward to the results of the Avenue Project.

II. Youth Task Force Members Presentation

- Kim and Anita gave a presentation to the group about themselves and what they hope to bring to the Task Force.
- Kim and Anita told the group they are both members of The Dorchester Youth Council. The Council consists of fifteen youth, ranging from the ages of 14-18, who are committed to making a difference and positive change in the Dorchester community.

- They highlighted DYC service contributed to 1,192 Community Service Hours.
- Some of the events they have been involved with were they Trick or Treat Canned Food Drive, Dot Ave Youth Summit, the SCI Mini-Grant Process, Daniel Marr Boys & Girls Club Holiday Party, Holiday Road Show, Safe Love, National Youth Service Day, and the Walk For Hunger Service Project
- Kim and Anita concluded their presentation by stating why they want to be involved with the Task Force and their foreseeable goals. They want to be to be a representative of youth, voice youth opinions, make connection, represent Dorchester, improve their neighborhood, and to be part of their future and the future of their community.

III. Presentation on the Wi-Fi DotWell Wireless Internet Access

- Matt Barry from Dotwell, gave a presentation regarding a partnership between Dotwell, the Codman Square Health Center, and the Dorchester House to deploy a wireless network in Dorchester.
- Matt mentioned the purpose of the project is to provide Internet access to area residents and community-based organizations. The goal of the partnerships will be to provide higher quality, more ubiquitous service by utilizing public infrastructure (such as light poles and traffic lights) to expand the coverage area.
- Matt highlighted Dotwell presently operates three public access points, installed on top of the Community Technology Center at 450 Washington Street, the Dorchester House at 1353 Dorchester Avenue, and at One Fields Corner at 1452 Dorchester Avenue. Mesh networking technology would be utilized to expand this existing network.
- Matt concluded by discussing some of the benefits of the program. Some of them include: providing a vehicle for public health communication, warnings and advisories; facilitating quick and convenient communications with health care providers and Dotwell program staff; provide an easy mechanism to increase awareness about community news, events, programs; and a low-cost way for families to communicate locally, nationally, and internationally with friends and family.

IV. Discuss Work Plan, Coordination w/MBTA, Peabody Square, Etc.

- Ralph gave an update on the Peabody Square Improvement Project. He explained the project contract is to do a 100% redesign of Peabody Square. Ralph mentioned the starting point for the project came out of St. Marks Main Streets visioning for the Square and utilizing their results as a stepping stone for having a 25% consensus plan by June.
- Ralph elaborated there will be three meetings between now and June.
- Ines told the group that it is important for the Task Force members to attend these meetings.
- Richard asked Ralph how long the process has been so far.

- Ralph responded by stating the consultant was hired mid-December and has been doing traffic studies since. He also mentioned the project will be coordinating with the Task Force.
- Anne asked if it is likely the Peabody Square consultant would be heading the Task Force RFP.
- Ines mentioned between 4-6 people had purchased the RFP. As far as having the same consultant, Ines said they'll find out April 10th, the day the RFP is due, to see if the same consultant submitted for the Action Plan.
- Ines further discussed the Dot Ave Action Plan timeline. She mentioned there will be a Bidder's Conference in the upcoming weeks to allow potential applicants to ask questions regarding the RFP. Ines again highlighted the April 10th due date. She went on to say a selection committee will be formed of roughly eight people from city agencies to review the proposals. Then the committee will shortlist the applicants and schedule a day for the chosen to present. Ines concluded by stating the consultant will be selected by May 10th and hope to have them come to the May 15th Task Force meeting.
- Ines gave the group an update on MBTA projects along the Avenue. She mentioned Barbara Boylan from the MBTA came to March's IAT meeting to give an update on the T-stations improvements on the Avenue. Ines discussed that they hope to have her come to the next Task Force meeting in April.
- Elizabeth Leary from ISD gave an update on last meeting's grate issue on Dorchester Avenue. She stated that the location was cited for not obtaining a permit
- Anne mentioned she had some concern with signage in the Savin Hill area and will follow up with Elizabeth regarding these issues.

V. Discuss Avenue Priority Locations

- Ines led the group toward a discussion on what would be the Avenue's priority locations.
- Rosanne asked why the Freeport intersection was so important.
- Anne said she was concerned as to why there is specific focus on areas on the Avenue and not the whole length.
- Vineet took the opportunity to describe the two of part of the Action Plan RFP to the Task Force and the reasoning behind why the group needs priority locations.
- Jane mentioned that it's best to look at a couple of intersections, and then really look at a couple of specific locations.
- Councilor Feeney stated that the Freeport intersection is a critical site.
- Jane mentioned there is already a 25% design for the area that BTM has from a previous study.
- Ed responded by stating the Freeport intersection needs a share of the money. Also, he stated Fields Corner stands out as the biggest offender on the Avenue. Ed also discussed the grating issue at the Melville

intersection. He believed ISD did not do the Task Force service by taking so long to react to the community's complaints about them. He further stated that they need to put more oversight on the Avenue.

- Arlene stated that they shouldn't forget about the Dorchester and Adams intersection.
- Sean mentioned the Task Force needs to structure the priorities and locations with the consultants. Sean asked Ines if she could refresh the group's memory regarding decision making for the Task Force.
- Ines replied that decisions were by vote, possibly by consensus. She went further by stating maybe the group should look at their decision making process.
- Ralph stated that maybe the group should think about the different levels of effort at locations. There could be other places that need to be totally reconfigured.
- Ines replied that there are other resources like the upcoming Dorchester Avenue Business Trend Analysis that can also shape priorities.
- Anne posed the question of how they can look after the new businesses that come to the Avenue.
- Andre replied that a possibility could be a package that is given to new businesses to help them.
- Regarding ISD issues, Jim highlighted the 300 sq. ft threshold that should trigger Design Review along the Avenue.
- Councilor Feeney stated that ISD and their commissioners are not following through. She went further and said they need to have a serious talk with ISD to deal with the inconsistency.
- Ines replied that we will strategize with ISD.

VI. Discuss Next Community Meeting

- Ines posed the question to the group if they should have a community meeting next month (April) or in May.
- Jane mentioned that maybe the Task Force should summarize the comments for each area.
- Ines replied that they have already done that, but the group will revisit that info.
- The group decided to hold off the community meeting until May.
- Randi gave an update on the Fields Corner Mall. She stated the Mayor is concerned and put a call into the owners. Randi told the group the city has some short term solutions that the Mayor will give to the owners.
- Ines stated they are short-term solutions that could financially work.
- Andre mentioned there are city resources as well to help.
- Elizabeth stated that code enforcement is out there tagging them everyday.

VII. Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned at around 8:00 p.m.